

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02
/043 W

-----115207 301631Z /50

R 301606Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7803
INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY ROME

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USEEC

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ELAB, FR
SUBJECT: LABOR SCENE BEGINS TO BUBBLE

1. SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH AUGUST IS TRADITIONALLY A DEAD MONTH, THE RHETORIC ON THE LABOR SCENE HAS BEEN MOUNTING WITH CFDT LEADER MAIRE SO FAR GETTING MOST OF THE PUBLICITY IF NOT THE PRIZES. SEPTEMBER IS CERTAIN TO BE LIVELIER STILL. END SUMMARY.

2. AUGUST IS SUPPOSED TO BE THE TRADITIONAL QUIET MONTH, WHEN ALL FRANCE GOES ON VACATION AND PARIS IS TURNED OVER TO THE TOURISTS. THIS AUGUST THINGS HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT. FOR EXAMPLE, THE CGT ACCUSED IN PRINT OF BEING A BRANCH OFFICE OF THE PCF, REACTED WITH HIGHLY VOCAL AND PUBLIC RAGE; AND SO OPENED ITSELF UP TO A FEW WELL-PLACED BARBS OF JOURNALISTIC
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DISBELIEF. MORE IMPORTANT, CFDT LEADER EDMOND MAIRE GAVE AN INTERVIEW TO LE MONDE IN WHICH HE INTER ALIA NOT ONLY CALLED ON THE PARTIES OF THE LEFT TO GET SERIOUS IN THEIR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE COMMON PROGRAM (I.E. TO TAKE UP AUTOGESTION), BUT ALSO STRESSED THE NEED FOR TAKING A HARD LOOK AT THE LEFT'S ECONOMIC PROGRAMS, PARTICULARLY AS THEY CONCERN THE DISTRIBU-

TION OF INCOME, AND LIMITING THE RANGE OF SALARY DIFFERENTIALS. THIS LAST THEME WAS PICKED UP BY THE PCF AND PROMPTLY TURNED BY IT INTO AN EMBARRASSING DEMAND ON THE PS IN THE NEGOTIATIONS ON THE UPDATING OF THE COMMON PROGRAM. RECOGNIZING HIS ERROR, MAIRE HAS REFUSED TO COMPOUND IT, AND REJECTED AS "INOPPORTUNE" A PCF OFFER TO MEET AND EXCHANGE IDEAS ON THIS POINT.

3. THESE EVENTS ARE THE OPENING SKIRMISHES OF WHAT PROMISES TO BE A LIVELY AUTUMN. THE CGT AND THE CFDT ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN MEETING TO DISCUSS MATTERS OF JOINT INTEREST, AND THERE IS A GREAT DEAL OF SPECULATION AS TO WHETHER THE TWO FEDERATIONS WILL BE ABLE TO WORK OUT A JOINT PROGRAM FOR PRESENTATION TO ANY FUTURE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEFT. THE CGT IS VERY ANXIOUS TO PUT SUCH A PROGRAM TOGETHER, NOT ONLY TO INSURE THE CONTINUATION OF ITS PROFITABLE ALLIANCE WITH THE CFDT, BUT ALSO TO SERVE AS A CORRAL INTO WHICH IT WILL TRY TO HERD THE OTHER UNIONS SUCH AS FEN, FO AND THE CFTC. (THE BRICKBATS THAT HAVE BEEN THROWN BETWEEN THE CFDT AND THE CADRE'S UNION, CGC, OVER THE SALARY DIFFERENTIALS ISSUE PROBABLY RULE OUT ANY KIND OF COMMONFRONT WHICH WOULD INCLUDE THE CGC.) THE CGT IS ALSO STRESSING THAT IT WILL NOT TOMORROW GIVE TO A GOVERNMENT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MENT OF THE LEFT THE CONCESSIONS IT REFUSES TODAY TO A GOVERNMENT OF THE RIGHT.

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4. COMPLICATING MATTERS, AND CERTAIN TO HAVE AN EFFECT ON THE UNIONS' MANEUVERINGS, IS THE STALEMATE IN THE PUBLIC AND NATIONALIZED SECTOR WAGE NEGOTIATIONS. ALTHOUGH DISCUSSIONS WERE RESUMED IN JULY, THE UNIONS ARE ALL EXPRESSING VARYING DEGREES OF EXASPERATION WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S SEEMING UNWILLINGNESS TO IMPROVE ITS OFFERS; AND FO LEADER BERGERON HAS WARNED ANEW THAT THE GOVERNMENT MUST ALTER ITS STAND IF THERE IS TO BE AN AGREEMENT. FEN LEADER HENRY HAS TOLD US PRIVATELY THAT HE DOESN'T THINK THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION WILL CHANGE AND THAT THEREFORE AN AGREEMENT IS MORE THAN UNLIKELY. ALREADY THE CGT AND CFDT ARE TALKING OF AN ELECTRICITY STRIKE IN SEPTEMBER. THE IMPACT OF THESE PUBLIC SECTOR NEGOTIATIONS ON THE COURSE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LABOR FIELD SHOULD NOT BE UNDERESTIMATED. NOT ONLY

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IS A STALEMATE LIKELY TO HELP HOLD THE CGT AND CFDT ALLIANCE TOGETHER AS WELL AS KEEP FEN SOLIDLY IN THE ANTI-GOVERNMENT CAMP, BUT IT WILL ALSO, GIVEN THE STRENGTH, MILITANCY AND IRRITATION OF THE FO PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS, LIMIT BERGERON'S FREEDOM TO MANEUVER.

5. IN ALL THESE DEVELOPMENTS THERE IS AT LEAST ONE HUMOROUS NOTE. ACCORDING TO A SOURCE CLOSE TO MAIRE, THE CFDT HEAD IS NOW CONCERNED THAT THE COMMUNISTS HAVE BEEN USING HIM AND THAT HE MAY HAVE MADE A MISTAKE.
HARTMAN

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